



### Building Community Coalitions

**National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)** is a success due to the collaboration of countless organizations in local communities. Working with other groups in your area can provide you with insight and resources about substance use disorders, treatment, and recovery to help make your **Recovery Month** campaign in September even stronger. Developing a coalition or a task force that emphasizes the importance of real people and real stories of recovery will help your community be an even bigger part of this national effort.

#### Coalitions: partnerships for success

**Coalition Fact:** All the organizations involved in your coalition should come together with common goals—to highlight the success that people have in treatment and recovery, to show that substance use disorders are medical conditions that should be treated as such, and to emphasize that access to treatment is essential to improve the health and well-being of our communities.

A coalition is a formal arrangement between multiple organizations that work together to achieve a common goal. For **Recovery Month**, the goal is showcasing real stories of people in recovery to spread the word that those with a dependence on alcohol and/or drugs can reclaim their lives. There are two ways to participate in a coalition: build one from the ground up (which takes time, but provides a wider range of resources and control) or join an existing coalition (where you can bring your ideas to the table immediately).

One type of coalition can include “everyday” members of the community who have no particular ties to any organization.

These alliances, called citizen-advocate partnerships, are a type

of coalition that engages citizens and representatives from key groups, such as treatment providers or faith-based organizations, to work together toward the same goal.

Depending on your needs and goals, it might be more practical to form a task force to focus on a single objective instead of a coalition. A task force is a temporary collaboration between individuals or organizations, usually formed around the same specific issue, with a set objective in mind. Once the task force achieves its goal, it typically presents its findings and/or successes and then disbands.

#### Three tips for developing a coalition

If there is no existing coalition in your community, you can develop one that emphasizes the goals of **Recovery Month**. To do so, you can use the following steps:

1. **Determine what resources already exist in your community.** Research the public and private sectors to determine who might make relevant and positive contributions to your **Recovery Month** coalition. Think about who has been active in the recovery community or other related health issues, such as mental health, in the past. Organizations that could build a sustainable coalition include:
  - Recovery support groups or individuals in recovery
  - Treatment centers and clinics



## RESOURCES

- Criminal justice system programs
  - Disability groups
  - Government officials and agencies
  - Law enforcement agencies
  - Mental health organizations
  - Child welfare organizations
  - Neighborhood groups
  - Private companies/businesses
  - Faith-based organizations
  - Schools and universities
  - Youth groups
  - Civic groups
  - Health-related organizations
  - Foundations
2. **Get background information on your potential partners** by using the resources listed in the next section of this document. Reach out to your potential coalition allies, taking advantage of any existing connections and relationships you may have with members of their organizations.
  3. **Confirm the individuals and groups in your partnership** and determine whether you included a diverse selection of organizations that work with different groups in the community. Set priorities and goals, communicate and meet regularly, have a main contact person to coordinate all members, and choose a leadership team that oversees the coalition and ensures that the plan's execution is on time and in adherence with the established goals.

## Tools for a successful coalition

- **Figure out what already exists in your community** by contacting the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) at 1-800-54-CADCA or [www.cadca.org](http://www.cadca.org). CADCA is the only national organization representing community anti-drug coalitions. The network encompasses more than 5,000 organizations and can provide you with materials and technical assistance if no established coalition exists in your area.

- **Use the “*Recovery Month Resources*” brochure** in this planning toolkit to locate organizations with similar interests. Look at the different types of organizations involved as national ***Recovery Month*** planning partners, listed in the “Planning Partners” document in this toolkit, and identify similar groups in your community.
- **Gauge the success of your community coalition** by using the tools in Join Together’s publication, ***How Do We Know We Are Making a Difference? A Community Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Indicators Handbook***. Join Together is a national resource for communities working to reduce substance use disorders. This handbook is available on the Web at [www.indicatorshandbook.org/Indicators\\_Handbook-v1.pdf](http://www.indicatorshandbook.org/Indicators_Handbook-v1.pdf).

## Example to follow

San Antonio Fighting Back, a coalition comprised of both government agencies and nonprofits, is a successful local coalition that actively participates in ***Recovery Month***. Fed up with the rise of crime and violence in their community, a group of San Antonio citizens came together to reduce substance use disorders. For their ***Recovery Month*** celebration in 2007, San Antonio Fighting Back planned the first-ever 3K Recovery Walk and Family Fun Day. The event brought together 25 community agencies and groups, had 375 people in attendance, and raised \$11,000. The coalition anticipates the event to take place for years to come.

## Coalition resources

### Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)

*CADCA builds and strengthens the capacity of community coalitions to create safe, healthy, and drug-free communities. The organization supports its members with technical assistance and training, public policy, media strategies, conferences, and special events.*

625 Slaters Lane, Suite 300  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
800-54-CADCA (22322) (Toll-Free)  
[www.cadca.org](http://www.cadca.org)

### Faces & Voices of Recovery

*This national recovery advocacy organization mobilizes people in recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs, families, friends, and allies in campaigns to end discrimination and make recovery a reality for even more Americans.*

1010 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 708  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
202-737-0690  
[www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org](http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org)



## RESOURCES

### **National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACoA)**

*This national family recovery organization has members and affiliate organizations throughout the country who initiate or support **Recovery Month** activities in their local communities. NACoA provides its members with information, tools, and strategies to support recovery for children and families impacted by addiction.*

11426 Rockville Pike, Suite 301  
Rockville, MD 20852  
888-55-4COAS (2627) (Toll-Free)  
301-468-0985  
[www.nacoa.org](http://www.nacoa.org)

### **National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD)**

*Founded in 1944, NCADD is dedicated to increasing public awareness and understanding of the disease of alcoholism and drug dependence. NCADD and its national network of state and local affiliates provide education, prevention, information/referral, intervention, treatment services, and advocacy, and have helped hundreds of thousands of individuals and families into recovery.*

244 East 58<sup>th</sup> Street, Fourth Floor  
New York, NY 10022  
800-NCA-CALL (Hope Line) (Toll-Free)  
212-269-7797  
[www.ncadd.org](http://www.ncadd.org)